

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 480

By Haile

A RESOLUTION to honor the city of Gallatin upon being named the "Nicest Place in America" by *Reader's Digest*.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in recognizing those Tennessee communities that bring pride to this State through their commitment to the tenets of neighborliness and the cultivation of an atmosphere of philanthropy and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, one such Tennessee community is Gallatin, which was recently named the winner of the first "Nicest Place in America" contest by *Reader's Digest*; and

WHEREAS, launched in April 2017, the "Nicest Place in America" contest is sponsored by *Reader's Digest* in conjunction with Nextdoor, a private social network for neighborhoods; the goal of the inaugural, crowd-sourced competition was to search for exceptional places that are epicenters of community spirit and trust, communities wherein kindness and respect thrive; and

WHEREAS, the contest's call for submissions solicited 283 nominations, and of these initial nominees, ten finalists were selected by a team of *Reader's Digest* editors and announced in June 2017. Public voting garnered nearly 80,000 votes, of which Gallatin received more than 30,000; public voting results combined with the votes of the editorial team and the opinions of celebrity judge Brett Young, a burgeoning country music recording artist, determined the winner; and

WHEREAS, that Gallatin was ultimately selected as the unequivocal winner should come as no surprise to those familiar with this remarkable community, the ethos of which embodies compassionate respect and activism; and

WHEREAS, the stories of several standout citizens helped garner the win for Gallatin, individuals such as police chief Don Bandy, who has made it his mission to foster unity and

transparency in the face of challenges that have brought discord and turmoil to other cities throughout the United States; Chief Bandy has implemented various community-engagement strategies that build relationships between officers and the general public; and

WHEREAS, Gallatin was also represented by spiritual leader Pastor Derrick Jackson, who leads the First Baptist Church of Gallatin, an African-American congregation founded more than 150 years by an ex-slave; Fred Bailey, founder of Children Are People, an organization that offers free tutoring and counseling to underprivileged children in the Gallatin area; and Jessi Smith, a student who made it her mission to grant the wish of a fellow classmate who suffers from a brain disorder; and

WHEREAS, Gallatin is home to many residents who are committed to charity work; more than 135 nonprofits partner with Gallatin's Shalom Zone, the largest branch of the worldwide organization that seeks to promote economic development across a wide variety of cultural organizations in nearly 200 locations; and

WHEREAS, a diverse community, Gallatin is home to a thriving refugee population; in the 1990s, when Sudan was ravaged by civil war and its people were displaced, Gallatin welcomed the refugees with open arms, regardless of their age or language proficiency; currently, the Southern Sudanese Youth Connection helps more than 1,000 refugees in the area find housing and education opportunities; and

WHEREAS, once known for being one of the last towns in the South to integrate, a town where the local high schools were segregated until 1971, Gallatin has transformed into a community that thrives on diversity and prides itself on being a place that everyone from all walks of life can be proud to call home; and

WHEREAS, the altruistic citizens of Gallatin consistently place the well-being of the community at the fore of their decisions and actions, and it is fitting that this exemplary city be recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend the city of Gallatin upon being named the "Nicest

Place in America" by *Reader's Digest*, extending our sincere best wishes for continued success and happiness for all the citizens of this remarkable community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.